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The development and administration of a university's policy toward drinking on campus involve a number of complex historical, legal, and ethical issues. Among the questions most pertinent to the framing of an alcohol usage policy are the following: To what degree should a university be responsible for regulation of the personal habits of its students? Should university regulations concerning drinking be more restrictive than city and state laws? Should faculty and staff be subject to the same policy as students? To what degree should the "in loco parentis" concept be incorporated into the policy? How can the rights of both drinkers and non-drinkers be adequately protected? Will a restrictive policy be respected? Will a permissive policy lead to increased student drinking and disruption of educational activities?

Historically, the success of a university's alcohol policy has depended upon the achievement of a working consensus among the various constituencies within the institution on the issues underlying the policy (Riggs, 1967). A first step in achieving such a consensus is the assessment of the opinions of the groups concerned with collegiate drinking. Of particular relevance are the opinions of the constituency most affected by a university's alcohol policy - its students. The purpose of the present study was to survey the opinions of students at the Twin Cities Campus of the University of Minnesota on issues basic to the University's alcohol policy.

Alcohol Policies at the University of Minnesota

Prior to the 1973-74 academic year, the University of Minnesota did not permit students to consume alcoholic beverages in any campus locations. However, in August, 1973, the University Regents approved an interim drinking policy

permitting consumption of alcoholic beverages at limited times and places within University Residence Halls (but not in other campus locations). The passage of this interim policy came two months after the implementation of a Minnesota state law lowering the age of majority from 21 to 18. University drinking policies were further amended in February, 1974 when the Regents approved a policy which mandates the President of the University to specify where and on which occasions drinking should be permitted on campus. A particular focus of the present report is to provide data on student opinions relevant to the further specification of this most recent policy.

Method

Sample

Questionnaires were mailed to a random sample of 496 students enrolled at the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities) during Spring Quarter, 1974. Responses were received from 402 students. Four other students returned blank questionnaires, and seventeen students were not reached since they had moved and left no forwarding address. Adjusting for these seventeen students, the response rate was 81%.

Sixty percent of the respondents were males and 40% were females. Thirteen percent were freshmen, 16% were sophomores, 20% were juniors, 24% were seniors, and 27% were adult specials or graduate students. Thirty percent of the sample were married.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire items covered three major areas: (a) perceptions of current and projected drinking policies, including opinions of the University's interim alcohol policy, opinions of possible changes in the policy, and the expected effects of policy changes; (b) sanctions and enforcement, opinions concerning penalties for policy violations and the groups to which sanctions should apply; (c) perceptions of alcohol treatment and education programs, opinions about the

need for special alcohol-related programs, as well as preferences in the referral of problem drinkers.

The Questionnaire items were pretested on 14 students at Macalester College on January 24, 1974. Members of the full random sample for this study were mailed a pre-letter which introduced the study and requested their participation. Questionnaires, accompanied by a cover letter, were mailed to the sample on February 19. Non-respondents were mailed a first follow-up letter on March 6 and a second follow-up letter with a second copy of the Questionnaire on March 19.

Results

A majority of respondents (59%) indicated that the University needs a special policy on the consumption of alcoholic beverages on campus, whereas 24% saw no need for a special policy, and 17% were undecided. Ninety-three percent reported that students should have a voice in deciding University policy on drinking.

Table One shows students' opinions on permitting consumption of alcoholic beverages in various campus locations. For each location, students were asked to indicate whether consumption should be permitted at any time, at restricted times only, or never. In accord with the interim drinking policy, a majority of respondents favored permitting consumption in the residence hall student rooms. Most students also favored permitting consumption of alcoholic beverages any time or at restricted times in University cafeterias, the Campus Club, student unions, faculty lounges, residence hall dining areas, residence hall lounges, and graduate student lounges. Students were almost evenly divided on whether consumption of alcoholic beverages should be permitted in campus open spaces (e.g., lawns, malls, walkways) and in athletic fields and buildings. A majority of students (57-95%) reported that consumption of alcoholic beverages should never be permitted in the libraries, classrooms, University employee offices, and auditoriums.

Insert Table One

Table Two presents a summary of the data on students' perceptions of the effects of permitting consumption of alcoholic beverages in more campus locations than at present. Most students reported that permitting consumption of alcoholic beverages in more campus locations would neither adversely affect students' study habits nor lead students to drink more than they are already drinking (both on and off campus) nor would it encourage students to drink excessively. However, less than half of the students indicated that permitting drinking in more campus locations would not lead to an increase of incidents of student misconduct on campus, 27% of the students indicated that the number of incidents would increase and 26% expressed neither agreement nor disagreement with the statement.

Concerning alcohol policy infractions, a majority of respondents reported that University employees should receive the same penalities for violating drinking policy as students. Also, a majority of respondents reported that drunk and disorderly students on campus should receive the same penalties as drunk and disorderly students off campus. Most students indicated that the University rules for the consumption of 3.2% beer should be the same as those for other alcoholic beverages.

Pertaining to what treatment services the University should provide for persons with existing and potential alcohol related problems, half of the students responded that the University should initiate special classes in alcohol education for University students. Half of the students also indicated that the University should initiate special programs to identify students and employees with drinking problems. Finally, a majority of students indicated that the University should provide special treatment programs for students and employees with drinking problems.

Insert Table Two

Table Three shows student responses to where they would be most likely to refer a student with a drinking problem for help. The most frequently chosen source of help was Alcoholics Anonymous, while the Student Counseling Bureau, community drug treatment centers, and the University Health Service, respectively, were the next most frequently chosen sources.

Insert Table Three

Discussion

Students' opinions on issues concerning the University's policy toward campus alcohol consumption cannot be adequately characterized as either "liberal" or "conservative". On the one hand, a majority of students believes that a special University policy toward campus alcohol consumption is necessary. Moreover, most students endorse the total prohibition or drinking in campus locations clearly related to the educational and administrative functions of the University - libraries, classrooms, and offices. Unrestricted drinking is favored by a majority only for the Campus Club and residence hall rooms and lounges.

On the other hand, a large majority feels that students should have a voice in determining the University's drinking policy. Additionally, most students would like to see the same sanctions on campus drinking applied to faculty and staff as are applied to students. Students are apparently willing to support restrictions on their campus drinking so long as they perceive these restrictions as democratically determined and applicable to all groups within the institution.

Support for alcohol-related education and treatment programs should also be noted. For several years professionals in the health sciences have been attempting to foster public recognition of alcohol abuse as the nation's most important drug problem (HEW, 1971, 1974). The finding that half of the respondents in this survey see a need for alcohol-related programs at the University of Minnesota may indicate that young adults are starting to become aware of the extent of the alcohol problem.

References

Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare. First special report to the U.S. Congress on alcohol and health from the secretary of health, education and welfare. December, 1971.

Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare. Alcohol and health: new knowledge. July, 1974.

Riggs, L. College administration of alcoholic beverage regulations. In G. Maddox (Ed.), The domesticated drug, drinking among collegians. New Haven: College and University Press, 1970.

Complete copies of the questionnaire employed in this study and response percentages for each item are available upon request from Student Life Studies, 327 Walter Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455.

TABLE 1

STUDENT OPINIONS ON CONSUMPTION OF

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN VARIOUS CAMPUS LOCATIONS (N=402)*

Campus Locations	Response percentages to "Consumption of alcoholic beverages should be allowed..."		
	Never	Restricted Times	Any Time
University cafeterias	35	38	27
Campus Club (faculty dining club)	8	34	59
Classrooms	88	9	3
Student Unions	20	40	40
Libraries	95	3	3
Faculty lounges	22	36	42
Campus open spaces (e.g., lawns, malls, walkways)	42	21	37
Residence hall student rooms	6	10	84
Residence hall dining areas	19	46	35
Residence hall lounges	13	32	56
Athletic fields and buildings	49	35	16
Auditoriums	58	33	10
University employee offices	71	21	8
Graduate student lounges	24	33	43

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may sum to 99% or 101%

TABLE 2

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF ALCOHOL POLICY EFFECTS, ENFORCEMENTS, AND TREATMENT SERVICES (N=402)

Perceptions	Response Percentage				
	SA*	A	N	D	SD
Policy Effects					
Permitting drinking in more campus locations would adversely affect the study habits of students.	12	15	19	40	14
Permitting drinking in more campus locations would not lead students to drink more than they are already drinking (both on and off campus).	18	36	18	23	5
Permitting drinking in more campus locations would encourage excessive drinking by students.	3	12	17	46	21
Permitting drinking in more campus locations would lead to an increase of incidents of student misconduct on campus.	5	22	26	38	8
Policy Enforcement					
University employees should receive the same penalties for violating drinking policy as students.	41	43	9	5	2
Drunk and disorderly students on campus should receive the same penalties as drunk and disorderly students off campus.	43	47	7	3	1
University rules for the consumption of 3.2% beer should be different from rules for the consumption of other alcoholic beverages.	8	23	15	36	18
Treatment Services					
The University should initiate special classes in alcohol education for University students.	11	38	33	12	5
The University should initiate special programs to identify students and employees with drinking problems.	11	39	30	15	6
The University should provide special treatment programs for students and employees with drinking problems.	25	52	15	7	1

*SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree N= Neither Agree Nor Disagree D= Disagree SD= Strongly Disagree

TABLE 3

PRIMARY CHOICE OF HELP SOURCE

REFERRALS FOR PROBLEM DRINKERS (N=402)

Help Source	Primary Choice Percentage
University Health Service	14
Student Counseling Bureau	18
Campus Assistance Center	4
Community drug treatment centers	15
Private physicians (not at hospitals)	2
Hospitals (besides the University Hospital)	1
Rabbi, priest, minister	4
Alcoholics Anonymous	31
Drug Information Service Center	8
Other	4